H. R. 4304

To designate the Republic of Korea as a program country under the visa waiver program established under section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 10, 2005

Mr. Moran of Virginia (for himself, Ms. Bordallo, Mr. McCotter, Mr. Abercrombie, Mr. Capuano, and Mr. Blumenauer) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To designate the Republic of Korea as a program country under the visa waiver program established under section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Republic of Korea has proven dedication to freedom and friendship with the United States. The country has exemplified true dedication as allies to the United States against tyranny.
(2) The United States and the country have close historical and military ties and the country has been designated a major non-NATO ally.

(3) Korean history provides pioneering examples of constitutional democracy and religious tolerance throughout Asia.

(4) The United States is home to over 2,000,000 individuals of Korean heritage and ancestry.

(5) Korean immigrants have contributed greatly to the success of industry and agriculture in the United States.

(6) Since the end of the Korean Conflict in 1953, the Republic of Korea has become a stable, democratic nation.

(7) The Republic of Korea has adopted economic policies that promote free markets and rapid economic growth. The Republic of Korea is the world’s eleventh largest economy.

(8) The Republic of Korea is the seventh largest trading partner of the United States and the fifth largest market for United States agricultural products.

(9) The Republic of Korea has been a staunch ally and supporter of the efforts of the United
States with respect to the global war on terrorism,
Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi
Freedom.

(10) The Republic of Korea demonstrated its
commitment to the United States and to the global
war on terrorism by supporting continued operations
in Afghanistan.

(11) The Republic of Korea has further dem-
onstrated its commitment by committing over 3,000
troops to the cause of freedom and liberty in the
peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

(12) The Secretary of Homeland Security and
Secretary of State administer the visa waiver pro-
gram, which allows citizens from 27 countries, in-
cluding the French Republic and the Federal Repub-
lic of Germany, to visit the United States as tourists
without visas.

(13) The Republic of Korea unilaterally re-
pealed the visa requirement for United States citi-
zens traveling to the Republic of Korea for 90 days
or less.

(14) More than 626,000 citizens from the Re-
public of Korea visit the United States each year,
contributing to the local economies in the areas in
which they visit.
(15) The United States Embassy in Seoul is the busiest visa issuing consulate in the world and processes an average of 2,000 visas a day.

(16) During calendar year 2004, a total of 626,595 Korean citizens visited the United States, an increase of three percent over calendar year 2003.

(17) According to the United States Department of Commerce, overall tourism dollars spent in the United States by tourists from the Republic of Korea exceeded $1,000,000,000 in fiscal year 2004.

(18) Currently all potential Republic of Korea travelers seeking to obtain a travel visa to the United States must apply at the United States Embassy in Seoul, regardless of their place of residence in the Republic of Korea.

(19) The United States consular affairs office at the United States Embassy in Seoul has not been able to meet the growing demand for nonimmigrant visas to the United States due to lack of space and personnel, resulting in unnecessary delays, frustration, and loss of economic opportunity for the United States.

(20) The Republic of Korea will or has met all deadlines set by the Department of Homeland Secu-
rity with respect to passport and biometric standards.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATING THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA A VISA WAIVER PROGRAM COUNTRY.

Effective on the date of the enactment of this Act, and notwithstanding section 217(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1187(c)), the Republic of Korea shall be deemed a designated program country for purposes of the visa waiver program established under section 217 of such Act.